

A The faithfulness of God (Joshua 21:43-45)

- ❖ God had given Israel “ **all** the land” (Josh. 21:43 NIV) and had delivered into their hands “ **all** their enemies” (Josh. 21:44 NIV), so “ **every one** was fulfilled” (Josh. 21:45 NIV).
- ❖ The repeated use of the word “all” emphasizes God’s faithfulness in fulfilling his promises. His enemies had been defeated by God. They could inhabit the land because God had possessed it. They could be certain that they would finish driving out the Canaanites who still lived in the land because God had kept his promises thus far and would continue to keep them in the future.
- ❖ All of this works out for our good. God remains faithful (Deut. 7:9; Ps. 117:2; Lam. 3:22-23). He has promised to save us and give us the Earth as an inheritance, and he will fulfill this promise (Phil . 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:5; Ps. 37:29).

B What God has done and what He will do (Joshua 23:1-5)

- ❖ In his speech to the elders, Joshua begins by telling them what God had already done and what He was still going to do:
 - He has fought against the nations (Josh. 23:3)
 - He has divided the land among the tribes (Josh. 23:4)
 - He will drive out the nations that are left (Josh. 23:5)
- ❖ All this (what had already been done and what was yet to be done) was subject to a single condition on the part of Israel: obedience (Josh. 23:6).
- ❖ The history of Israel is a lesson for us today. God has already triumphed over sin and has given us the assurance of salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus (Col. 2:15).
- ❖ It is up to us to continue the battle, and to trust in the Holy Spirit in order to live a triumphant life (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:11-18).

C The reward for faithfulness (Joshua 23:6-10)

- ❖ The reward for Israel's faithfulness would be complete and absolute victory over all their enemies (Josh. 23:6, 10).
- ❖ In the context of the conquest of Canaan, faithfulness to God had to be manifested in three very specific ways:
 - Do not marry the inhabitants of the land (Josh. 23:7a)
 - Do not mention the names of their gods (Josh. 23:7b)
 - Not to worship their gods (Josh. 23:7c)
- ❖ They had to maintain spiritual purity. If they married the inhabitants, they would begin to speak of their gods, and would end up worshipping them. Thus began Solomon's apostasy (1 Kings 11:4).
- ❖ Therefore, we Christians are advised to follow the same recommendations, and not to marry unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14-16).

D What we must do (Joshua 23:11-14)

- ❖ We can say without a doubt that the main point of Joshua's speech is found in verse 11: to love God.
- ❖ Israel was to demonstrate its love by not loving other gods, which would result in serious harm to them (Josh. 23:12-13). Furthermore, Joshua proposes an incentive to nurture that love: God's faithfulness (Josh. 23:14).
- ❖ Today we have an even greater incentive: the example of Jesus (John 13:34). God desires to enter into an intimate and personal relationship with every person who responds to his love.
- ❖ Consequently, His love for all constitutes the framework for the manifestation of our voluntary and mutual love.

E The punishment for unfaithfulness (Joshua 23:15-16)

- ❖ Joshua ends his speech with harsh words of warning about the consequences of disobedience: suffering the wrath of God (Josh. 23:15-16).
- ❖ Just as the Lord's promises had been faithfully fulfilled regarding the blessing of Israel, the curses of the covenant would also come true if the Israelites broke it.
- ❖ The same love that led God to give his Son for us is the one that manifests itself in anger against those who stubbornly cling to sin (John 3:16; Romans 2:5).
- ❖ Israel failed and suffered its punishment. We today have the opportunity to write a different story: to remain faithful and abide in His love (John 15:9).